



TESTIMONY

Regarding

Raised Bill No. 6571 An Act Requiring an Analysis of the Corrosive Effects of Chemical Road Treatments

Before the

Committee on Transportation

March 14, 2011

Raised Bill No. 6571 requires the Commissioner of Transportation to conduct a study regarding the corrosive effects of chemical road treatments on various structures. The Connecticut Railroad Association supports the proposed bill but requests that the committee modify the proposed bill by including a specific requirement that the Commissioner study the impact of corrosive materials on highway/railroad at grade crossings.

Grade crossings throughout Connecticut are deteriorating at an alarming rate. One of the reasons for that deterioration is the damage done to crossings from the use of corrosive and conductive ice melting material on our highways. Corrosive material is carried into the structure of crossings either because it is applied in a liquid form or solid material is applied on and around the crossing, and/or because of poor highway drainage it diverts water laden with ice melting material into the crossing structure. The material causes severe deterioration along the base of the rails in the crossings, deteriorates electrical circuits within crossings and causes crossing devices to malfunction. Ice melting material such as salt causes warning device components (track circuits) used to normally detect an actual train to falsely detect a train, causing the lights to flash and gates to drop. Corrosive materials also can cause premature mechanical failure of fasteners that physically secure the steel rail to wood or concrete ties enabling rails to move laterally within a crossing creating a considerable safety concern including risk of derailment. This condition is difficult to detect as the grade crossing roadway surface covers the track with materials such as asphalt, rubber or wood planks making it impossible to inspect visually without removal of the crossing surface.

While the proposed legislation does reference "other infrastructure" it appears to be related to highway specific structures. We therefore recommend including the underlined language in the proposed legislation providing a specific reference to highway/railroad grade crossings as follows:

Section 1. (Effective from passage) The Commissioner of Transportation shall conduct an analysis of the corrosive effects of chemical road treatments on (1) state, municipal and private vehicles, (2) state, municipal and private roads, bridges, highways and other infrastructure, (3) Highway/Railroad at grade crossings including the surface, rail, circuitry, and signals within the crossings, (4) the environment.

On behalf of the freight railroad industry in Connecticut, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Rian J. Nemeroff
Chairman
Connecticut Railroad Association
215-914-0392
r.nemeroff@hrrc.com

C: **CRA Members:** Central New England Railroad; Connecticut Southern Railroad; CSX Transportation; Housatonic Railroad Co.; Naugatuck Railroad; New England Central Railroad; Pan Am Railways; Providence & Worcester Railroad

Gaffney, Bennett and Associates, Inc.

There are eight freight railroads that operate over 700 miles of railroad tracks serving customers in the State of Connecticut. We transport loaded and empty railcars for delivery or shipment, to and from Connecticut's employers.